

Application No.: 10/624,501
Art Unit: 3636

Attorney Docket No. 23052.00
Confirmation No. 7836

REMARKS

By the present amendment, Applicants have amended Claims 1, 5 and 7, and canceled Claims 2, 3, 4 and 10. Claims 1 and 5-9 and 11-16 remain pending in the present application. Claims 1, 7 and 12 are independent claims.

In the recent Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1, 2, 6-9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(b) as being anticipated by either Liou et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,381,590) or Thibodeau et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,520,392). The Examiner allowed Claims 12-16 and indicated that Claims 3-5 and 10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and of any intervening claims.

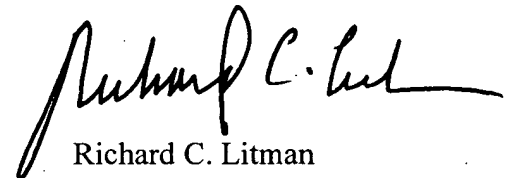
The Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter is noted with appreciation. In this regard, Applicants have amended independent Claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of Claims 4. The dependency of Claim 5 has been changed to now depend from Claim – 1 –. Also, independent Claim 7 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of Claim 10. The incorporated Claims 4 and 10, as well as Claims 2-3 have been canceled. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1 and 7, as amended, and corresponding dependent Claims 5-6, 8-9 and 11, as well as allowed Claims 12-16 are allowable over the prior art of record.

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For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. If such is not the case, the Examiner is requested to kindly contact the undersigned in an effort to satisfactorily conclude the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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